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DOI:

[10.1093/ehr/cew056](https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/cew056)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

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Citation for published version (APA):

Burns, A. (2016). Review of *Daughters of the Anglican Clergy: Religion, Gender and Identity in Victorian England*, by Midori Yamaguchi (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2014). *The English Historical Review*, 131(549), 483-484. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/cew056>

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Daughters of the Anglican Clergy: Religion, Gender and Identity in Victorian England, by Midori Yamaguchi (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, Gender and Sexualities in History, 2014; pp. xiv +324. £68.00).

In this thoroughly researched monograph, Midori Yamaguchi offers a collective portrait of the lives of Anglican clerics' female children over the nineteenth century. Drawing on more than 200 examples, including a substantial number where the women concerned generated some form of life writing, she is able to offer a richly textured account embracing cases involving families from across the spectrum of church parties, clerical ranks and geographical regions. Her cast of characters includes both the famous (such as Charlotte Brontë, Edith Cavell, Catherine Marsh, and Sybil Thorndike) and many more obscure individuals, all of whom are identified in a biographical appendix. The first part of the book sets the scene with an account of the environment of the Victorian parsonage and the childhoods experienced within it. This is followed by a discussion of the contribution made by clerical daughters to parish work and their contribution to the wider texture of church life; then, in part 3, a consideration of the (sometimes complex) sexual and emotional lives of clerical daughters; their religious development; and then their fulfilment in their adult life in terms of both paid and unpaid work. The book ends with a longer case study of the experiences of clerical daughters in two interrelated clerical families in Essex, the Bramstons and the Luards.

Perhaps inevitably, one of the main conclusions that the reader will draw from the book is the very wide variation in the life experiences of the women it considers, making it difficult to offer many easy generalizations. Many of those that can be offered, moreover, are not that dissimilar to those that could be made regarding a wider cohort of women of the middling classes in mid-Victorian England, such as the importance of philanthropic activity in helping give a sense of purpose to lives that in other respects appear significantly constricted by prevailing conventions regarding domesticity, marriage and

appropriate behaviour. At times the reader is entitled to ask for a little more guidance on how distinctive the author believes the experience of clerical daughters to have been. For example, much is made of how life in a rectory prepared a woman for life as a clergyman's wife (and over 45% of the sample married a cleric), but we are not really shown that they acquitted themselves differently in this role from women drawn from non-clerical backgrounds who might also have been involved in philanthropic work.

The book nevertheless highlights how important clergy daughters were to a number of key developments of the later Victorian period. In the parsonage, greater attention to parish machinery combined with the prevailing habit of despatching sons of the cloth to boarding school to foster a 'feminization of the parsonage'. Clerical daughters also provided more than a third of all headmistresses in secondary schools before 1920, and represented the largest cohort by parental occupation of early students at women's colleges (28% of all Girton students 1869-94, for example). Elsewhere, Yamaguchi emphasises how the lives of her subjects changed over her period: whereas more than 60% of those who tied the knot married clerics before 1880, only 24% did so after that date, as the economic position of the clergy became more fragile at the same time as other opportunities opened up for the sons of professional men, just as they did for those in her sample who remained single.

The book shows clear signs of its origins in a doctoral dissertation, but is very readable, if occasionally repetitious. There are perhaps two main weaknesses beyond those already noted. The author overdoes the idea of the clerical household as 'a religious "family enterprise"' (the term is borrowed from Davidoff and Hall) 'expected to take on the role of instilling into the parishioners the dominant ideas on class, gender and Englishness' (p. 44) – it leads to a reductive functionalism which begs questions of agency. Secondly, references to institutions and individuals within the Anglican Church are often garbled, sometimes to unintentionally comic effect. Thus we encounter such hitherto

unknown dignitaries as Joseph Bickersteth, 'mayor' of King's College London and an unnamed 'Dean of the Church of St Paul's' (in fact Joseph Bickersteth Mayor and Richard Church), and the apparently unique offices of canon at Westminster and Durham; while anyone trusting to a purportedly helpful glossary of key terms will acquire very *unhelpful* definitions, among others, of a 'perpetual curate', 'prebendary' and 'vestry'. The former set of errors may be in fact be the unintended consequence of editorial hands seeking to 'polish' the author's English without sufficient knowledge of the subject, but not the latter. Nevertheless, many readers will profit from Yamaguchi's distillation of the experience of this key aspect of the clerical household in Victorian England and her admirable ability to do this in a language other than her own native Japanese.

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